BILLINGS – The program is called Canstruction®.

The slogan is “one can.”

But, it will actually be many can and many cans when Rocky Mountain College’s Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) hosts the first-in-Billings food fund drive this March at the Billings Food Bank.

Canstruction® is a volunteer trademarked charity of the Design and Construction Industry under the auspices of the Society for Design Administration.

Teams of architects, sponsoring businesses, and organizations compete to design and build colossal structures made from full cans of food. The results are giant “canned art” exhibits, according to Dr. Karen Beiser, RMC business and economics assistant professor and SIFE faculty advisor.

“We’re proud to partner with Billings architects, the Billings Food Bank, our neighbor down the street – the Circle K Club from Montana State University–Billings – and the whole community to bring this to Billings. Not only will it be challenging and fun, but it will help with the effort to educate the public about a great need and, hopefully, address that need,” Beiser added.

The theme for the first annual Billings Canstruction® event is something about Billings, about Montana, and/or about a Billings organization. Rocky is hoping to see a dozen teams working to build entertaining structures, which will be judged by a panel of judges and by the public.

The teams will build the structures on March 13 & 14 at the Food Bank and the public may view them during regular Food Bank hours from March 15-18.

According to Sheryle Shandy, the Food Bank executive director, Canstruction is a
wonderful way to cap a great year for serving the area’s underprivileged.

The event will celebrate the new Food Bank with a Billings Canstruction gala reception and awards ceremony.

Construction of a new building was made possible, in part, by a $1 million donation from the Fortin Foundation in December 2008, the largest single gift the Food Bank received, according to Shandy.

The Fortin Foundation gift, presented by Nick Cladis of Capstone Wealth Management, was a result of the Fortin family recognizing the prudent way the Food Bank was operated and “the passion that the board and Sheryle had for the project,” Cladis told The Billings Gazette.

The handsome new building on Fourth Avenue North eliminated a block of blight, The Billings Gazette stated in a November 2009 editorial, and serves another function besides helping feed the poor. It’s a business incubator, providing a commercial kitchen for caterers, a training center for the under and unemployed.

The new building is the ideal place to hold the Canstruction event. The huge warehouse provides ample space for the structures to be built and displayed, a good venue for the public to see the structures, and eliminates any problem of delivering the cans when the event is over.

“They’ll be here, ready to be stacked on shelves and used,” Shandy said. “Our mission is first to feed the hungry, but also to educate, to address root causes of hunger and poverty and to promote economic development,” Shandy said.

Holding Canstruction in its new three-level, 54,000-square-foot facility complements that mission.

Businesses and organizations interested in participating should contact Karen Beiser, RMC assistant professor, business administration and economics, (406) 657-1170, or email: karen.beiser@rocky.edu.

#   #   #

You may read more about Canstruction and see images from events at: http://www.canstruction.org/

#   #   #